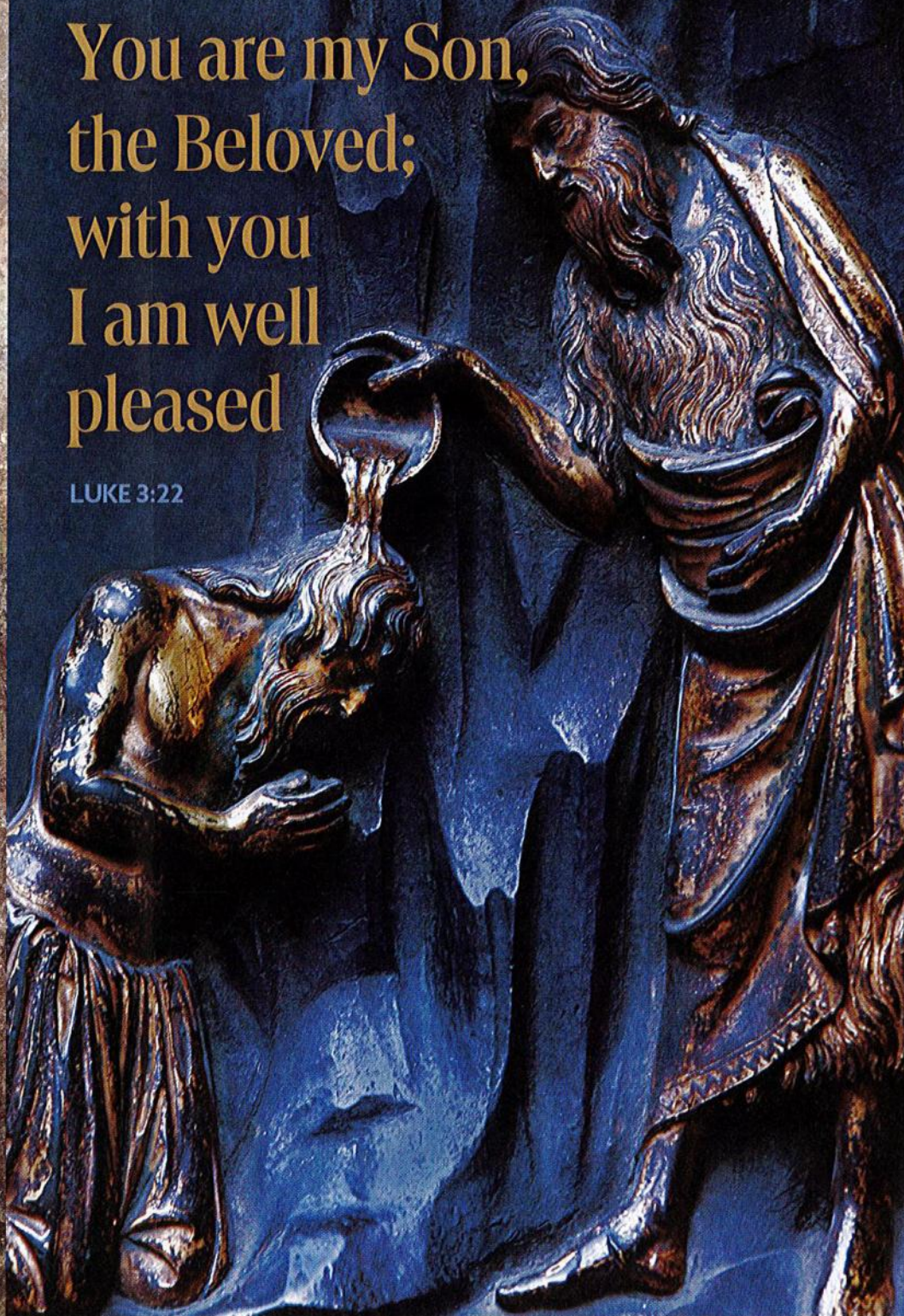


You are my Son,
the Beloved;
with you
I am well
pleased

LUKE 3:22



St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

Email: st.paulsyork@comcast.net

www.stpaulsyork.org

www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George

YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York

WELCOME Thank you for being with us.

We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 188 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

Offerings Offerings are received during the liturgy. They are presented along with gifts of bread and wine at the altar. You may also donate via our website at www.stpaulsyork.org or use the QR Code provided.



Restrooms are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery which is accessed through the double doors front right.

The Nursery is accessed through the front right double doors. The liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Parents are asked to stay with their children. Quiet activities are also available in the Narthex for infant through preschool children to use with an adult.

Lutheran Church in York, PA - St. Paul's Lutheran...

stpaulsyork.org

An AED/Defibrillator unit is located in the Good Shepherd room. It is placed on the wall left side of the Springettsbury door exit.

Parents, please do accompany your child to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.

The altar flowers are presented by Kristine and Larry Gross to the Glory of God in loving memory of their parents Dr. John Welsh and wife Thelma (Toni), and Mr. Harry Gross and wife Roberta.



Flowers This Week

STAFF

Pastor

Youth Director

Organist, Choir Director

Children's Music Director

Bell Choirs Director

Secretary

Sexton

Preschool Director

Rev. Stanley Reep

Kelly Moore-Spencer

Victor Fields

Julianna Jones

Leah McComas

Patee Pizzirusso

Ted Weikert

Deb Becker

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kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net

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Jjones.stpaulsyork@gmail.com

lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com

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tweikert.stpaulsyork@gmail.com

director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com

January 12, 2025
Baptism of Our Lord
Holy Communion 8:00 A.M. & 10:30 A.M.

PRELUDE

When Jesus Came to Jordan

Ennis Fruhauf

Stand turning to face the font

8:00 AM THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
**and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took
delight.**

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.

At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.
**By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs
of your promise and servants of all.**

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.

Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and
love.
**To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity
of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.**

Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus
Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin. Grant that we who are reborn to new life
in him may live in righteousness and holiness all our days, through your Son, Jesus
Christ our Lord.
Amen.

10:30 A.M. SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM *(insert)*

ENTRANCE HYMN *How Firm a Foundation (ELW 796)*



1 How firm a foun - da - tion, O saints of the Lord,
 2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When through fi - 'ry tri - als your path - way shall lie,
 4 "Through - out all their life - time my peo - ple shall prove



is laid for your faith in Christ Je - sus, the Word!
 for I am your God and will still give you aid;
 my grace, all - suf - fi - cient, shall be your sup - ply.
 my sov - 'reign, e - ter - nal, un - change - a - ble love;



What more can he say than to you he has said
 I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,
 The flames shall not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign
 and then, when gray hairs shall their tem - ples a - dorn,



who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?
 up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand."
 your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine."
 like lambs they shall still in my bo - som be borne."

APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY.

Father in heaven, at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful in their calling to be your children and inheritors with him of everlasting life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

Sit

FIRST READING

Isaiah 43:1-7 *(back cover)*

PSALMODY Psalm 29 *Spoken responsively*

¹Ascribe to the ¹LORD, you gods,*

ascribe to the LORD glo-¹ry and strength.

²**Ascribe to the LORD the glory ¹due his name;***

worship the LORD in the beau-¹ty of holiness.

³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of ¹glory thunders;*

the LORD is upon the ¹mighty waters.

⁴**The voice of the LORD is a pow-¹erful voice;***

the voice of the LORD is a ¹voice of splendor.

⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the ¹cedar trees;*

the LORD breaks the ce-¹dars of Lebanon;

⁶**he makes Lebanon skip ¹like a calf,***

and Mount Hermon like a ¹young wild ox.

⁷The voice of the LORD splits the flames of fire; the voice of the LORD ¹shakes the wilderness;*

the LORD shakes the wilder-¹ness of Kadesh.

⁸**The voice of the LORD makes the ¹oak trees writhe***

and strips the ¹forests bare.

⁹And in the temple ¹of the LORD*

all are ¹crying, “Glory!”

¹⁰**The LORD sits enthroned a-¹bove the flood;***

the LORD sits enthroned as ¹king forevermore.

¹¹The LORD shall give strength ¹to his people;*

the LORD shall give his people the bless-¹ing of peace.

SECOND READING

Acts 8:14-17 *(back cover)*

Stand
VERSE

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Repeat alleluia
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (*back cover*)
The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**
At the conclusion of the Gospel.
The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sit
SERMON

Pastor Stan Reep

Stand
HYMN OF THE DAY *When Jesus Came to Jordan (ELW 305)*

1 When Je - sus came to Jor - dan to be bap - tized by John,
2 He came to share temp - ta - tion, our ut - most woe and loss,
3 Come, Ho - ly Spir - it, aid us to keep the vows we make;
he did not come for par - don but as the Sin - less One.
for us and our sal - va - tion to die up - on the cross.
this ver - y day in - vade us, and ev - 'ry bond - age break.

Continued on next page...



He came to share re - pen - tance with all who mourn their sins,
So when the dove de - scend - ed on him, the Son of Man,
Come, give our lives di - rec - tion, the gift we cov - et most:



to speak the vi - tal sen - tence with which good news be - gins.
the hid - den years had end - ed, the age of grace be - gan.
to share the res - ur - rec - tion that leads to Pen - te - cost.

8:00 AM NICENE CREED

10:30 AM Continues with the prayers on next page

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.**
Through him all things were made.
**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy
Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.**
**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**
**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**
**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**
**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

A brief silence.

Lord, nurture the baptized equipping us to proclaim the good news. Today we remember Young Adults in Global Mission. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Lead us to care for water, land and all of your creatures. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Guide federal and state legislators, city and county officials, judges and juries.

Strengthen our resolve to serve all in need. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Be with individuals and families affected by addiction or mental health challenges.

Uphold each person as your beloved, especially those we name before you. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Support work on behalf of immigrants and refugees, and equip us to use our gifts for the sake of neighbors near and far. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Comfort all who grieve. Dwell with us in this life and, at the last, join us with the saints whom you have created, formed, and named. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope of your promise, made known through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Sit

OFFERING

8:00 AM Organ

As with Gladness Men of Old

Paul Manz

10:30 AM Chancel Choir

This is My Beloved Son

Dan Uhl

OFFERTORY

As with Gladness Men of Old (ELW 302) stanza 3

3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at thy cra - dle, rude and bare,
so may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,
all our cost-liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n-ly king.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you,

O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

DIALOGUE *Stand*



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

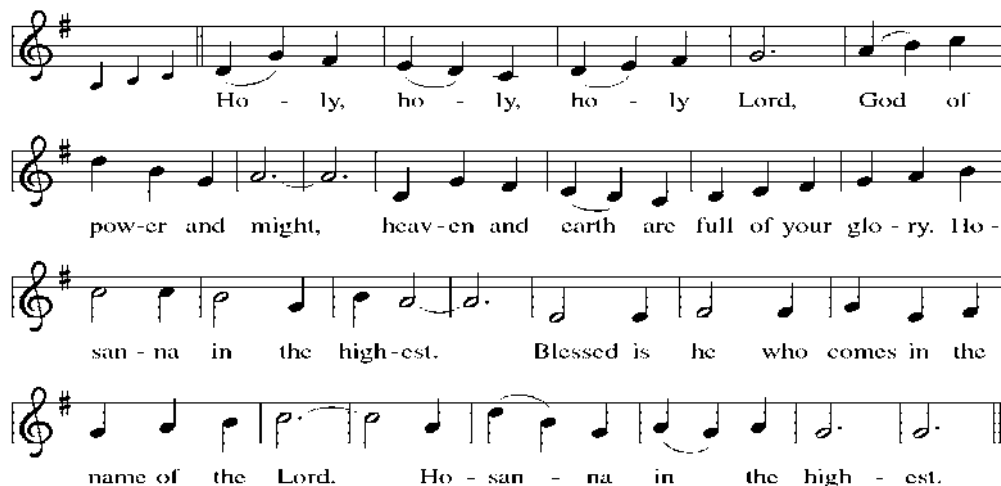
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. Sharing our life, he lived among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to his own brilliant light. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God; you are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Having come into the world, he fulfilled for us your holy will and accomplished our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving Passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his promise to come again, we give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, not as we ought, but as we are able;

and we implore you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving,

and, with your Word and Holy Spirit, to bless us, your servants,

and these your own gifts of bread and wine;

that we and all who share in the body and blood of your Son

may be filled with heavenly peace and joy,

and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be sanctified in soul and body,

and have our portion with all your saints.

All honor and glory are yours, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, now and forever.

Amen

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

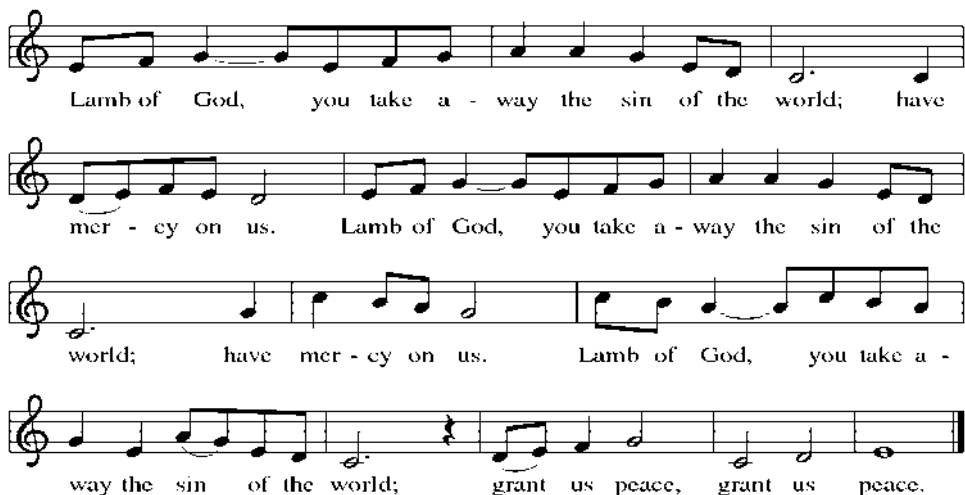
**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

FRACTION *A brief silence is kept.*

AGNUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

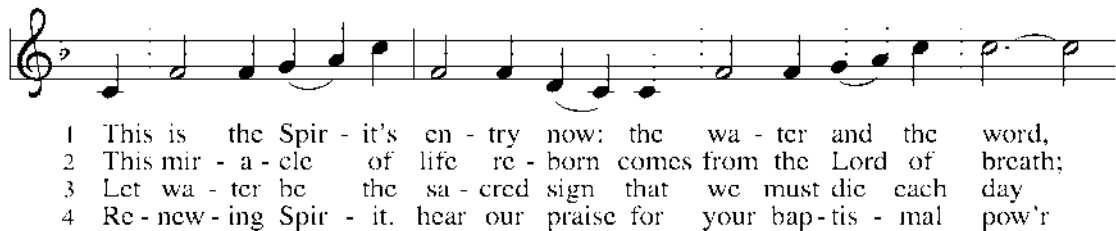
COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL *Sit*

Holy Communion at St. Paul's Church is "open" to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

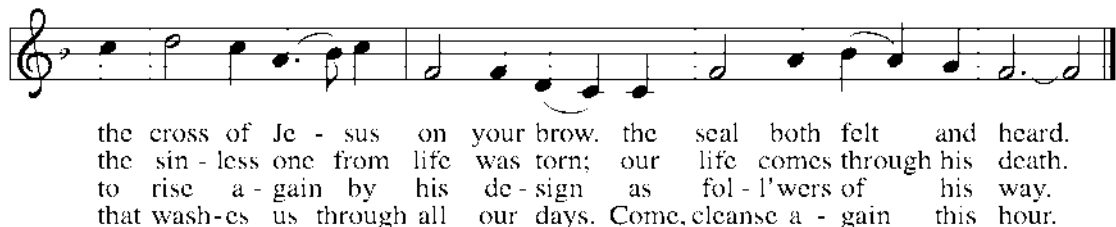
Procedure for receiving Communion:

- 1. Come to communion using the center aisle.*
- 2. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.*
- 3. Take your place along the chancel step.*
- 4. The ministers will bring the host and wine to you.*
- 5. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.*
- 6. Return to your pew using the side aisle*

COMMUNION HYMN *This is the Spirit's Entry Now (ELW 448)*



1 This is the Spir - it's en - try now: the wa - ter and the word,
2 This mir - a - cle of life re - born comes from the Lord of breath;
3 Let wa - ter be the sa - cred sign that we must die each day
4 Re - new - ing Spir - it. hear our praise for your bap - tis - mal pow'r



the cross of Je - sus on your brow. the seal both felt and heard.
the sin - less one from life was torn; our life comes through his death.
to rise a - gain by his de - sign as fol - l'wers of his way.
that wash - es us through all our days. Come, cleanse a - gain this hour.

Stand

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen**

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -



filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre-pared in the



sight of ev - ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the na - tions



and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.



Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Lord God, grant that all who have been fed with Bread from heaven may be renewed in the covenant of their Holy Baptism and, following your Son in true faith and obedience, may become your children in name and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

The congregation remains standing until the minsters and servers have left the chancel.

POSTLUDE

All Who Believe and are Baptized

Robert Proulx



2025 Flower Chart

The 2025 flower chart is posted on the Springettsbury vestibule bulletin board. The cost of the flowers is \$35 per vase. You are welcome to sign up to provide one or both vases. After you have signed up, simply make a check payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and mark it "altar flowers". This is a great way to honor someone, celebrate a milestone in life, or remember a loved one. The flowers may be taken home with you at the conclusion of the 10:30 AM liturgy or you may have them given to someone who is sick, shut in, or hospitalized. If you wish, you can contact the office to reserve a date, and to provide all of the correct information for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin.

Tanzania, Konde Diocese and St. Paul's recent trip

On Sunday, February 23 at Advent Lutheran Church, E. Market St., York, the Synod Konde Committee is sponsoring an event to deepen relationships with our companion congregations. Attendees will be able to make a bright colored sign in Swahili (like those pictured in the July 2025 calendar), hear a presentation from St. Paul's members who travelled to Tanzania summer 2024, learn about women in ministry in Konde Dioceses, prepare for a 5K fundraiser for Mbeya Hospital Saturday, April 26 and find out how you could participate in a future mission trip. The event is scheduled from 2:00-4:00 PM.



About being sick

We are in the season of colds and flu and other forms of sickness. Please, when you do not feel well, or when you know that you have been exposed to someone extremely contagious, please stay home from church and utilize the live stream accessed from our web site stpaulsyork.org. This summer we added an additional camera to enhance the viewing experience. While we love to have a full church nave, we want nothing more for anyone who is ill to stay home, rest, take care of themselves and not put others of the faith community at risk. Thank you.

This Week at St. Paul's January 12-19

Church office open Mon—Thurs, 7:30 AM—4:00 PM, Friday 7:30 AM—11:30 AM

Sunday, January 12 Baptism of Our Lord

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:15 AM Sunday School for all ages
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live-Stream
 Sacrament of Holy Baptism
 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Room

Monday, January 13

7:00 PM Finance Committee—In person

Tuesday, January 14

Council Reports due to Secretary

9:30 AM Pantry
 6:00 PM Create for Preschool thru Grade 6

Wednesday, January 15 Newsletter Deadline

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave
 10:30 AM Bible Study—Christ Hall

Thursday, January 16

10:00 AM Preschool & Pastor—Nave
 3:00 PM Book Club—Good Shepherd Rm
 6:00 PM English Class—Community Rm
 6:30 PM Handbell Choir
 7:30 PM Chancel Choir

Sunday, January 19

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist
 9:15 AM Sunday School for all ages
 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist—Live-Stream
 11:30 AM Women's Group—Christ Hall
 6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Room

Monday, January 20 Martin Luther King Day

Office Closed

Serving the Lord with Gladness

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Live Stream	Greeters	Ushers -	Early: Set-up Late: Clean-up
1/12	8:00 AM	Bob Reed	Denise Rider	Lois Ann Schroeder		Mike & Linda Hanson	Team 1E: Jeff Riese, John Monk, Alex Bastian	Tim & Melissa Yakim
	10:30 AM	Aaron Jacobs	Larry Becker	Anna Herdson	Allen Reep	Jessica & Tristan Ericson	Team 1L: Dave Kopp, Darren Smith, Kass Keleta	Larry & Janet Moore

Book Club meets at St. Paul's—January 16th 3:00-4:00 the Book Club will meet at the church to discuss *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell* by Robert Dugoni. All are welcome!



St. Paul's Women's Group will meet on January 19 in Christ Hall after the 10:30 AM service.

Food Pantry Needs: Plastic and paper grocery bags. Peanut butter.

Monetary donations can be placed in a “special” envelope marked “Pantry”.

Volunteers on: Tuesday (distribution day), Thursdays (food delivery days) and some Sundays (pantry stocking days) Contact Teresa Rohrbaugh, Patty Snyder, Ken Hinkle, or the church office (717-843-8155) with questions.

The “Pantry Grocery Cart” in the Good Shepherd Room is for bags and food donations only.

Music and Create will resume on January 14—Age 3 through Grade 6

Tuesday evenings 6:00 PM—7:15 PM

We provide this opportunity for our families with young children to engage in music and art while also having the opportunity to connect with other families. The program is designed for children ages 3 through grade 6. We divide the children into two age groups, age 3 through grade 1 and grade 2 through grade 6.

St Paul’s is collecting clothing for Union Lutheran Church’s Clothing Ministry and your help is requested. Union collects ‘gently used’ clothing (and shoes) for its clothing closet and offers it **free of charge** to needy families in the York City community. A bin has been placed in the Good Shepherd room to collect any clothing you would like to donate. These donations will surely be a blessing to our neighbors. Union’s volunteers are very appreciative of our cooperation and our help. If you have large donations you may take them directly to Union Lutheran Church. Simply call them to arrange a time.

January Adult Education, Sundays, Christ Hall 9:15 AM

“Lessons from Dietrich Bonhoeffer” Tristan Ericson (Meets in Christ Hall)

January 12 - February 16, A new curriculum written by Dr. Lori Brandt Hale, President of the International Bonhoeffer Society – English language section and a professor of religion at Augsburg University in Minneapolis. Plan to invite a friend to attend with you.

Catechetical Instruction Continues for students in grade 7 & 8.

January 12—February 16

The group gathers in the Upper Level Youth Room. The Rite of Confirmation is scheduled for Sunday, March 2, the Feast of the Transfiguration. Please mark your calendars now so that you are present in worship to support the young women and men as they confess their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Baptism of Our Lord C, 2025

Isaiah 43:1-7,

Acts 14:17, Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Tuesday evening a small group gathered here to begin the task of removing Christmas greens and decorations. The building, beautiful in its own right, was enhanced by the elegance of the fresh natural decorations for the Christmas season. As the work took place, in my head I could still hear the beautiful voices of the congregation singing carols welcoming the Christ Child. *“Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing all ye citizens of heaven above!”* It was stunning and magnificent.

75 miles away, on the same Tuesday evening, President Jimmy Carter’s body lay in repose at our nation’s capital. There in that magnificent building the U. S. Naval Academy Glee Club sang in his honor; *“Eternal Father strong to save, O Savior, whose almighty word, O Holy Spirit who didst brood, O Trinity of love and power.”* Their voices, simple, elegant, in lush harmony sang in honor of the 39th President. They sang of God’s eternal power and word to save, not just those in peril on the sea, but for all people who are battling the raging seas of life. The U. S. Naval Glee Club was stunning and magnificent.

In the first reading from the Old Testament we hear of a perilous time for God’s people. They were in captivity in Babylon. They were under control of a foreign ruler; a ruler who had generations before plundered their land and took into captivity the educated, the artisans and crafts people, and the religious leaders. Those who remained were adrift without capable leadership. Nearly four generations had passed; the equivalent of some 150 years. The people were ready for something stunning and magnificent. They had their fill of perilous days and chaotic times. Into this situation the Prophet Isaiah announces the beauty of the voice of God. God’s voice is calling them and announcing to them that they are precious and honored and loved. God has something new in store for them, something truly stunning and magnificent. They will return home and in their returning they will also return to the Lord. They are delivered from sin and are promised a future.

In the gospel reading from Luke we hear of John the Baptist and how people were in the wilderness. They too had experienced plenty of perilous situations and the time had come for them to experience something different. When John preached repentance and forgiveness of sins the people were filled with expectation and hope, they questioned in their hearts if John might be the long promised Messiah the one to make all things new? They were longing to see and hear something different from prophecies of doom and gloom. They were expecting something stunning and magnificent.

And there, after all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and while he was praying the stunning magnificent thing happened. The heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, *“You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”*

This is a word that people truly need to hear. This is a word that is stunning and magnificent because it comes even in the midst of the perilous and chaotic times of life. God's love and power, The Eternal Father's saving word is calling to you, and claiming you and all humanity as precious, honored, loved. That Word is the very word claiming Eloise this morning. That Word is the word that forgives sin and promises future. This is a stunning and magnificent word.

The heavens opened that day and God, made known in Christ Jesus, waded into the, perilous raging waters of life to save us from sin. The Beloved, the Son of God, receives the Fathers affirmation "*This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.*" Those gathered that day knew something of the raging seas of life and they were in need of a less perilous way of life. They sought solace, a fresh start, and a new beginning. It most likely wasn't a new year, but they were all ready for things to be different, better, fresh, new. And when Jesus went down into the water and was baptized, even though he was without sin, didn't need a fresh start or a new beginning, the people couldn't believe their eyes and ears. A dove, the Spirit descending, and a voice proclaiming *this is my Son the beloved with whom I am well pleased*. On the banks of the Jordan River God's outpoured love for humanity was made known.

An Epiphany is making known to the world God's reign of forgiveness and love. Prophets had long before proclaimed it. Like Isaiah who told the people of Israel when they needed to hear it most, that they were *precious and honored and loved*. That's evangelism in a nut shell. Telling and showing that all people are precious and honored and loved. That is God's way. From kids in preschool and Sunday school to youth traveling through the awkward years of middle school, high school students who think they know it all about most things, to adults who disappoint and fall short, to seniors who are often avoided or who are tucked away in assisted living and care centers. That's what Jesus' baptism initiated. It initiated a new era of God's outpoured love.

Today God proclaims to us in Word and Sacrament that each one of us is precious, honored and loved. Last week we heard from Emma Wagner representative for Lutheran World Relief. She shared stories of people who are in perilous situations and how through the work of LWR they are calming the raging waters that are seeking to devour so many people and leaving them in poverty or near death. She shared story after story of how people are struggling. Through the gospel they work tirelessly letting people know that they are precious and honored and loved. These are not simply words spoken, they are words saturated with action. This is our work as the baptized; to announce God's word to the world.

Tuesday evening the group worked collaboratively to accomplish the list of jobs to be done. Without fanfare greens were taken down, candles cleaned and packed away, red bows stored for another year, pine needles swept from the floor. Christmas began the celebration of Christ among us. Now the Christ of God received baptism and began his earthly ministry. Ministry that calms seas, gives aid to the perilous, and announces to all humanity that they are precious and honored and loved. Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:1-7

But now thus says the LORD,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
²When you pass through the waters, I will
be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not
overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not
be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
³For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
⁴Because you are precious in my sight,
and honored, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
⁵Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
⁶I will say to the north, "Give them up,"
and to the south, "Do not withhold;
bring my sons from far away
and my daughters from the end of
the earth—
⁷everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

Psalm 29**SECOND READING: Acts 8:14-17**

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit ¹⁶(for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). ¹⁷Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

²¹Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Next Sunday's Readings: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11.

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